

CITY OF REDMOND

# The City Council's Strategic Planning Retreat

Friday and Saturday, 19-20 March 2004  
The Channel Lodge, La Conner, Washington

# DRAFT

*To Redmond Citizens and interested parties: This report will be formally adopted by the City Council when the follow-up work outlined in the next steps section is completed. On April 27<sup>th</sup> the Council and Mayor will refine the strategies and work on objectives that may become budget items in two (2) to eight (8) years. Once that work is complete, the adopted report will replace this page. We all welcome your comments in the meantime.*

## SUMMARY

### of the Key Discussions, Decisions and Agreements

*Attending the retreat: Council President Nancy McCormick; Council Members Richard Cole, John Marchione, Tom Paine, John Resha, Jim Robinson and Pat Vache; Mayor Rosemarie Ives; and facilitator Jim Reid*

**Facilitator's Note:** This document summaries the key discussions, decisions and agreements of the strategic planning retreat of the Redmond City Council and Mayor, held at the Channel Lodge in La Conner on Friday afternoon and evening, 19 March 2004, and the following day, Saturday, the 20<sup>th</sup>.

### RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN WHICH WE AND THE CITY TAKE PRIDE

The retreat began with us identifying some of the accomplishments of the recent past that we are most proud of. Our list includes:

- Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) such as 140<sup>th</sup> Street, Old Redmond Road and Perrigo Park
- we managed to efficiently deliver services of high quality in a “tight” budget situation
- City Hall

- remodel of Grasslawn Park
- community conversations on mobility
- our engagement of citizens and the business community in local issues and decisions
- helping to educate our citizens about what local government is and does
- encouraging and stimulating people in the community to vote
- a large number of citizens stepped forward to run for City Council last year
- we came through a tumultuous political year “whole”
- demonstrated a regional perspective on transportation issues
- provided leadership in the Suburban Cities Association (SCA) on many regional issues

We took time to learn lessons from our successes by identifying factors that contributed to them. The factors which enabled us to be successful were:

- long list of partnerships we have recreated and employ
- flexibility: willingness to change opinions and positions with information and discussion
- hard work, drive and tenacity
- ability to make our vision real
- public service ethic: tremendous commitment to the citizens of Redmond
- professional, empathetic, quality staff focused on the City’s core mission
- ability to work in the arena of ideas, not personalities
- leadership
- City goes out of its way to engage citizens

We also recognize there are areas for improvement. We identified these projects as either not as successful as we had expected them to be or there were a few too many “bumps along the road:”

- City Hall not wrapped up, putting the three new Council members in an awkward position
- some projects keep popping up because we do not make a decision or there is not a clear path or outcome; example: Bear Creek Parkway
- indecision about Bear Creek Parkway is a barrier to achieving goals for downtown
- 116<sup>th</sup> Street is still not done despite much staff work
- decisions about whether or not new growth should pay for itself
- the need to notify residents of the impacts of new development on their property or neighborhood
- the permitting process

We cited these as potential barriers to success that we want to overcome or avoid in future decision-making:

- limited time
- the amazing amount of work, with everyone feeling overloaded
- lack of a “decision tree:” need to be able to see how some decisions affect or are affected by others, and thus need to be able to see and understand in what sequence they should be decided
- lack of sequencing leads to inaction
- tough choices, with some appearing to be bad, worse or worst
- changing opinions and positions
- history and baggage

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FACING AND SHAPING REDMOND TODAY**

Next, as we prepared to develop our joint vision for the City's future, we identified the significant issues, trends and challenges facing the City today. These are the primary ones we identified:

- traditional manufacturing, and whether or not we want to and can preserve it in Redmond
- environment vs. economic stability
- our commitment to higher densities leads to a myriad of challenges in such arenas as housing, transportation and redevelopment, plus citizen anger over higher densities
- affordable housing
- many people appear to want simple answers to complex problems
- the City's ability to continue to provide quality services with declining revenues: is our efficiency and effectiveness hurting us?
- the majority of our residents do not vote in favor of Tim Eyman's initiatives, yet have to live with their consequences as they are passed statewide
- less ability to rely on King County for services they have traditionally provided
- both the federal and state governments are pushing decisions to the local level of government
- changing demographics: our citizenry is more diverse
- this increasing diversity makes it more difficult to effectively engage citizens, particularly alienated and isolated residents
- our transportation infrastructure is unlikely to serve us adequately in the future
- "basketful" of "big ticket" items that need to be funded and produced
- with people today further away from their families, there is a need to provide services for people not connected to or in close proximity to their families; example: services for the elderly
- we are challenged to give the business community opportunities to be involved in the community
- maintain an environment of economic viability in times of great change
- technological changes are altering the way services are provided, and some of those changes, such as the growing trend to shop over the internet, have ramifications for the City's tax revenues
- preserving community treasures, including preserving our City's small town feeling
- while we wish to retain the small town feeling and flavor of Redmond, we need to balance that against stifling growth and creativity that has led to other small towns decaying and dying
- public safety and the sense of community: parents can't let their kids play out of their eyesight like when we were kids, which makes families isolated from one another and undermines the sense of community
- furthermore, with people more busy than ever, even knowing your neighbors is increasingly challenging
- "boundary-less communities:" definition of community is changing because it is not just defined by location anymore, but increasingly, by "interests"

## **RISKS, TRADEOFFS AND CHOICES FACING US IN THE FUTURE**

After defining the trends, issues and challenges of today, we anticipated future risks, tradeoffs and choices we will need to address, including:

- balancing economic and environmental interests
- community may not support our long-term investments because it does not see immediately the results and benefits

- with an increasingly culturally diverse citizenry, we risk inadvertently saying something wrong that could offend someone or some group
- also, our efforts to promote diversity could look to some as “tokenism”
- long-term planning, decisions and actions will be need more than ever, but may be increasingly difficult in a society where short-term actions and gratification are more valued or favored
- there are risks and costs associated with short-term thinking, such as major course changes every two or three years, and in light of the fact that Redmond as so many “big ticket” items to fund and produce
- lack of leadership: in a society and community that may be split evenly two or three ways, we risk never taking action if we wait for a consensus to emerge
- in making choices, we need to think carefully about what we control versus what we do not
- unintended consequences of our actions, and of inaction
- increasing unpredictability of our revenue sources, and the growing imbalance between our reliance upon sales tax and property tax revenues, will force us to make more difficult choices about which services the City provides
- we may be forced to decide to use more user fees (you play, you pay) to provide services
- there is a risk in not knowing about or understanding the tools available to us, and how and when to use them
- if the City chooses not to provide some services or reduces the quality of some of them, we run the risk of alienating our citizens
- the City also risks not being as creative as our citizens

## WE REACHED AGREEMENT ON THREE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Most of our Friday afternoon was devoted to envisioning where we want Redmond to be ten to fifteen years from now. Rather quickly three themes emerged:

1. **“Intersections.”** City government needs to focus on the “intersections” that bring people together. We may need to put our resources there so to strengthen the sense of community. We may also need to help create some new intersections as the means of building relationships among our City’s residents, including the business community. *(NOTE: Later in the discussion there appeared to be agreement to replace “intersections” with community.)*
2. **Regionalism.** There is a bigger world around us that we need to be involved in so that we maintain the high quality of life of our community and its residents. By participating in regional issues and activities, we can influence those decisions and actions of other jurisdictions that will have an impact on our community. By thinking regionally, we can focus on what is unique about our City and should be strengthened or provided, thus allowing us to determine that some amenities or services are more appropriately found or provided by other neighboring communities.
3. **Diversity.** Our population is increasingly diverse, and the City needs to lead the way in celebrating that diversity. Because of Microsoft and related businesses, Redmond is home to many newcomers from around the country and world who bring rich backgrounds and cultures to our community. We also have an increasing population of elderly citizens, and this trend will continue with the aging of the “baby boomers.” In addition to ethnic, racial and age diversity, the City has diversity among its neighborhoods, which have different socioeconomic levels, amenities and appearances.

On Saturday morning, after reviewing a summary of our discussions about these three themes, we reached consensus that they are the key principles and values that will guide our vision for the City’s future, and the strategies and actions needed to make that vision reality.

# THE CITY OF REDMOND

## The Council's and Mayor's Values and Principles

These three values and principles, agreed upon by the members of the City Council and the Mayor on 20 March 2004, are the foundations that guide our vision for the City of Redmond's future, and upon which we will base the strategies and actions required to that make our vision reality.

### COMMUNITY

**Strengthen existing and create new connections between people. Build community at the intersections of common interests.**

We define those intersections as home, work, and places to play, worship, learn and shop. They also include an understanding of what we have in common.

*The Council's and Mayor's Common Interests in Community:*

- Create people-to-people connections within neighborhoods and citywide.
- Preserve Redmond's unique character, as well as that of its neighborhoods.
- Address physical and "understanding" intersections.
- Target resources to enhance the intersections and strengthen or create connections.
- Do not divide the community through the actions of the City.
- Recognize that downtown may be the City's biggest and/or central intersection.

### REGIONALISM

**Strengthen Redmond's connections to and relationships with other communities. Strengthen what is unique about Redmond, while recognizing we need not be or provide everything that other communities in the region are or provide.**

We define regionalism as: a perspective; our involvement in regional issues and forums; our relationships and partnerships with neighboring cities; and our relationships and partnerships with federal, state and county agencies.

*The Council's and Mayor's Common Interests in Regionalism:*

- Strengthen our relationships and partnerships with neighboring communities.
- Influence regional decisions and actions to enhance the quality of life of Redmond citizens.
- Strengthen the qualities, characteristics and amenities that make Redmond unique and different, while recognizing the unique characters, amenities and services of nearby communities.
- Recognize that Redmond provides regional services, such as parks, employment and shopping.

- Address the devolution of responsibility from the Federal, State and County governments to the local level of government.

## **DIVERSITY**

**Take advantage of Redmond’s increasing diversity. Draw all our residents, with their diverse backgrounds, cultures and opinions, into our community’s life. Create and strengthen civic engagement by encouraging, promoting and celebrating diversity.**

We define diversity as the ethnic, racial, cultural, socioeconomic and age diversity within the City’s population. It is also the diverse look and “feel” of the City and its neighborhoods. And it is the diversity of thought and opinion reflected in our citizens.

*The Council’s and Mayor’s Common Interests in Diversity:*

- Help make the citizens of Redmond feel welcomed and become engaged in the community.
- Enable residents from different countries and cultures to become comfortable in American society and involved in the community.
- Foster diversity of thought and opinion to strengthen civic engagement.
- Preserve the diverse look and feel of the City’s neighborhoods.
- Encourage, promote and celebrate diversity.

## **WE ACHIEVED AGREEMENT ON NINE STRATEGIES**

After reaching consensus on the three principles, we brainstormed, discussed, refined and reached agreement on nine strategies for the next three to five years that will launch us on the way to achieving the City’s vision. The strategies are:

1. Provide choices to effectively move people, goods and services in, around and out of the City.
2. Use the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad right-of-way to benefit the community.
3. Foster vibrant, diverse and connected economic centers.
4. Create and connect neighborhoods.
5. Work with other governments and neighboring cities to efficiently deliver services and provide facilities.
6. Strengthen and enhance the sense of “place” and community.
7. Create and strengthen civic engagement by encouraging, promoting and celebrating diversity.
8. Assess and maintain fair, equitable and stable sources of revenue.
9. Encourage the community to embrace environmental ethics.

## **NEXT STEPS TO FOLLOW-UP ON RETREAT'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND AGREEMENTS**

We concluded the retreat by agreeing on these steps for following up on our achievements and agreements:

- By the end of April we will jointly review and refine the values and principles that we reached agreement on during the retreat.
- We will ask staff to produce for us a matrix showing which strategies are advanced and/or accomplished by each of the possible tactics.
- On March 30<sup>th</sup> we will brief the Senior Leadership Team on our discussions and tentative agreements at the retreat, and solicit their reactions and ideas.
- As part of our process for reaching agreement on tactics to implement the nine strategies, we will, in addition to discussing them with the SLT, identify what is already underway that helps advance the strategies, identify the resources needed to implement the strategies and tactics, and conduct another brainstorming session to eliminate, collapse and combine, and/or add to the list of possible tactics.
- Throughout the year we will periodically review and discuss progress in advancing our vision, values and principles, strategies and the tactics that we ultimately agree on.
- We may also engage the community in assessing the strategies and tactics.
- Make large poster-sized editions of our values and principles, and the nine strategies, and hang them for all to see in the Council chambers.
- Put the strategies on a card that is in front of Council members at our future meetings.